



Timeline for Major Changes to California Prescribing Laws

On September 16, 2003, the Governor signed Senate Bill 151 (Burton, Chapter 406, Statutes of 2003), repealing California's longstanding requirement for state-issued triplicate prescription forms for Schedule II controlled substances. In place of the triplicate, prescribers will use a tamper-resistant prescription pad that will be available from private printing companies that have been approved by the Board of Pharmacy and the Department of Justice.

Senate Bill 151 is a complex bill that makes substantial changes to California law regarding the prescribing of controlled substances, and these changes will be phased in over the next year:

Effective January 1, 2004

- Controlled substance prescriptions (Schedules II-V) are valid for six months.
- All pharmacies are required to report Schedule II controlled substance prescriptions to the CURES program in a time and manner established by the Department of Justice.
- Pharmacies are no longer required to enter the triplicate prescription number into CURES.
- Schedule II-V controlled substance prescriptions are required to be signed and dated only by the prescriber. Other information required on a prescription form may be printed or written in by the prescriber's staff.

Effective July 1, 2004

- The Department of Justice will no longer produce or distribute triplicate prescription forms.
- Triplicate prescription forms may be used to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances.
- Prescribers may use the new controlled substance prescription forms for Schedule II controlled substance prescriptions.
- Oral and electronic orders for Schedule II controlled substance prescriptions for patients in skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, home health care programs, and hospice programs are permitted. Such orders must be reduced to hard copy form and signed by the pharmacist on a form of the pharmacy's design.
- Prescribers dispensing Schedule II controlled substances are required to begin reporting these prescriptions to the Department of Justice.

Effective January 1, 2005

- Triplicate prescriptions are no longer valid.
- All written controlled substance prescriptions (oral and fax orders for Schedules III-V are permitted) shall be on controlled substance prescription forms.
- Pharmacies must report Schedule III controlled substance prescription information to the CURES program.
- Prescribers dispensing Schedule III controlled substances must report those prescriptions to the Department of Justice.